

he was to reimburse himself out of the book royalties as they accrued.

So far, the arrangement, though somewhat unusual, would not seem to have been unduly intricate, but it was rendered so by the further stipulation that every month, on receiving his advance of five hundred francs, Zola should hand Lacroix a promissory note for that amount, at three months' date, those notes being renewable until each volume was issued, when a proper account was to be drawn up. But with this system confusion set in, particularly as after a long delay in the serial issue of the first volume the War of 1870 supervened, in consequence of which M. Lacroix found himself in serious financial difficulties. •

To Zola, at the outset, everything seemed clear sailing. He had ensured himself an annual income of six thousand francs<sup>1</sup> for at least two years, and he had only to set to work. Thus, in May, 1869, he started on his first volume, "La Fortune des Kougou," in which he pictured the origin of the family whose history he proposed to recount, and its first ignoble rise to position with the help of Louis Napoleon's *coup d'Etat*. The scene of the narrative was laid at Aix, which had so long been Zola's home and which, for his literary purposes, he now called Plassans.<sup>2</sup>

His book was written in a Republican spirit with considerable boldness for those Imperial times. And in this connection, by way both of refuting a suggestion made by Edmond de Goncourt, that Zola, in his penury, would willingly have sold himself to the Empire, had it chosen to buy him, and of showing the young author's participation in the

<sup>1</sup> £240, about \$1,200.

<sup>2</sup> See *ante*, p. 30.